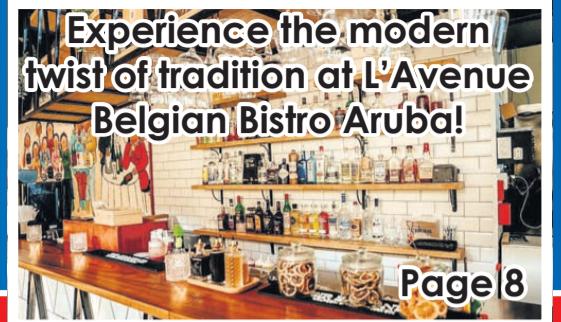


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## House passes temporary bill to avoid shutdown as lawmakers punt spending decisions to December

By KEVIN FREKING

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The House has passed a temporary measure that would keep federal agencies funded when the new fiscal year begins next Tuesday while putting final spending decisions for the next budget year until after the Nov. 5 election.

The stopgap measure, approved Wednesday by a 341-82 vote, generally funds agencies at current levels through Dec. 20. But an additional \$231 million was included to bolster the Secret Service after the two assassination attempts against Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump. Money was also added to aid with the presidential transition, among other things.



Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., arrives to speak to reporters after a lunch meeting, at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2024.

Associated Press

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Get to know our Picuda!**

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**"BEST RESTAURANT IN  
PALM BEACH"**

**FRENCH - CARIBBEAN**

-DAILY CHANGING SPECIALS-  
-LIVE MUSIC-  
-EARLY BIRD-

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# House passes temporary bill to avoid shutdown as lawmakers punt spending decisions to December

**Continued from Front**

The bill will next move to the Senate for final approval. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said that he had reached agreement ensuring passage will happen quickly. "This is how things should be done," Schumer said. "Without brinkmanship, without delay."

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., billed the measure as doing "only what's absolutely necessary," a statement directed at members of his own conference concerned about spending levels.

Still, it's a no-go for some Republicans, which forced House GOP leadership to rely on Democratic votes to pass the bill through a process that requires at least two-thirds support from voting members. Johnson said the only alternative to the continuing resolution at this stage would have been a government shutdown.

"It would be political malpractice to shut the government down," Johnson said. "I think everyone understands that."

The House floor was largely empty during debate on the measure. Lawmakers in both chambers are anxious to return to their home states and districts to campaign, smoothing the path for passage of a temporary funding fix. But more



**Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., left, confers with House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La., as they meet with reporters after a closed-door meeting with fellow Republicans, at the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2024.**

**Associated Press**

arduous fiscal negotiations await them at the end of the year.

Under terms of a previous deal to avoid a federal default and allow the government to continue paying its bills, spending for defense and nondefense programs would rise 1% next year.

The Senate has been charting a course to go above that level, while House Republicans have been voting for steep cuts to many nondefense programs, and they have attached policy mandates to the spending bills that Democrats overwhelmingly oppose. So a final agreement will be dif-

ficult to reach.

In the meantime, the temporary bill will mostly fund the government at current levels, with a few exceptions like the funding infusion for the Secret Service. The \$231 million for the Secret Service does come with strings attached. It's contingent upon the agency complying with congressional oversight. The bill also allows the Secret Service to spend its allocations faster if needed.

"Everybody understands that's critically important right now," Johnson said of the Secret Service money. Trump thanked lawmakers

for the extra Secret Service funding at a campaign event Wednesday. He had earlier called on Republicans not to move forward on a spending bill without also including a requirement that people provide proof of citizenship when registering to vote. That legislation failed in the House last week.

In a recent letter, the Secret Service told lawmakers that a funding shortfall was not the reason for lapses in Trump's security when a gunman climbed onto an unsecured roof on July 13 at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, and opened fire.

But acting Secret Service Director Ronald Rowe Jr. also made clear the agency had "immediate needs" and that he's talking to Congress.

The continuing resolution is needed because Congress is nowhere close to completing work on the dozen annual appropriations bills that fund much of the federal government. The House has passed five of the 12 bills, mostly along party lines. The Senate has passed zero.

Republicans blame the current impasse on Senate Democrats for not putting the dozen appropriations bills on the Senate floor for a vote, where they then could be reconciled with the House bills during negotiations. But Democrats counter that House Republicans are acting in bad faith, bogging the process down by undercutting an agreement that former Speaker Kevin McCarthy negotiated with the White House over spending caps for the 2024 and 2025 budget years.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, the top Democratic member of the House Appropriations Committee, said her party will accept nothing less than the 1% increase specified in that agreement. Also, if Republicans seek more than that for defense, there must be "dollar for dollar parity for nondefense," she said. □



**The logo for CrowdStrike and a Spirit Airlines webpage are shown on a computer screen and mobile phone screen, in New York, Friday, July 19, 2024.**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — An executive at cybersecurity company CrowdStrike apologized in testimony

to Congress for sparking a global technology outage over the summer. "We let our customers down,"

## CrowdStrike executive apologizes to Congress for July global tech outage

said Adam Meyers, who leads CrowdStrike's threat intelligence division, in a hearing before a U.S. House cybersecurity subcommittee Tuesday.

Austin, Texas-based CrowdStrike has blamed a bug in an update that allowed its cybersecurity systems to push bad data out to millions of customer computers, setting off a global tech outage in July that grounded flights, took TV broadcasts off air and disrupted banks, hospitals and retailers.

"Everywhere Americans turned, basic societal functions were unavailable," House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Mark Green said. "We cannot allow a mistake of this magnitude to happen again."

The Tennessee Republican likened the impact of the outage to an attack "we would expect to be carefully executed by a malicious and sophisticated nation-state actor".

"We're deeply sorry and we are determined to prevent

this from ever happening again," Meyers told lawmakers while laying out the technical missteps that led to the outage of about 8.5 million computers running Microsoft's Windows operating system. Meyers said he wanted to "underscore that this was not a cyberattack" but was, instead, caused by a faulty "rapid-response content update" focused on addressing new threats. The company has since bolstered its content update procedures, he said. □

# More women are charged with pregnancy-related crimes since Roe's end, study finds

By GEOFF MULVIGHILL

Associated Press

It became more common for authorities to charge women with crimes related to their pregnancies after the fall of Roe v. Wade in 2022, a new study found—even if they're almost never accused of violating abortion bans.

In the year after the U.S. Supreme Court ended the nationwide right to abortion in its Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization ruling, at least 210 women across the country were charged with crimes related to their pregnancies, according to the report released by Pregnancy Justice, an advocacy organization.

That's the highest number the group has identified over any 12-month period in research projects that have looked back as far as 1973. Wendy Bach, a professor at the University of Tennessee College of Law and one of the lead researchers on the project, said one of the cases was when a woman delivered a stillborn baby at her home about six or seven months into pregnancy. Bach said that when the woman went to make funeral arrangements, the funeral home alerted authorities and the woman was charged



The exterior of the Alabama Supreme Court building in Montgomery, Ala., is shown Feb. 20, 2024.

Associated Press

with homicide.

Because of confidentiality provisions in the study, Bach would not reveal more details on the case. But it was one of 22 cases in the study that involved the death of a fetus or infant.

"It's an environment where pregnancy loss is potentially criminally suspect," Lourdes Rivera, president of Pregnancy Justice, said in an interview.

The researchers caution that the tally of cases from June 24, 2022, through June 23, 2023, is an undercount, as were earlier versions. As a result, they can't be posi-

tive there wasn't a stretch between 1973 and 2022 with as many cases as after the Dobbs ruling. During the earlier period, they found more than 1,800 cases—peaking at about 160 in 2015 and 2017.

Most of the cases since Roe's end include charges of child abuse, neglect or endangerment in which the fetus was listed as the victim. Most involved allegations of substance use during pregnancy, including 133 where it was the only allegation. The group said most of the charges do not require proof that the baby or fetus was

actually harmed.

Only one charge in the report alleged violations of an abortion ban—and it was a law that was later overturned. Citing privacy concerns, the researchers did not identify the state where that charge originated. Four others involved abortion-related allegations, including evidence that a woman who was charged had abortion pills.

Bach pointed to the news organization ProPublica's reporting last week about two Georgia women whose deaths a state commission linked to the state law that

bans abortion in most cases after the first six weeks of pregnancy. The family of one of them, Candi Miller, said she was avoiding seeking medical treatment after she took abortion pills for fear of being accused of a crime. States with abortion bans—including 14 that bar it at all stages of pregnancy and four, such as Georgia, where it's illegal after about the first six weeks—have exceptions for women who self-manage abortions. But Bach said that people seeking abortion have been charged with other crimes.

"She did not want to seek help because of her fear that she would be prosecuted," Bach said. "That is a really realistic fear."

The majority of the cases in the study came from just two states: Alabama with 104 and Oklahoma with 68. The next state was South Carolina, with 10.

Rivera said a common thread of those three states—which were also among the states with the most cases of pregnancy-related charges before the Dobbs ruling—is that their supreme courts have issued opinions recognizing fetuses, embryos or fertilized eggs as having the rights of people. □

## Rep. Ocasio-Cortez says New York City mayor should resign

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE  
Associated Press

U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on Wednesday called on New York City Mayor Eric Adams to resign, the first nationally prominent Democrat to do so amid escalating federal criminal investigations into the mayor's administration and a string of unexpected departures of top city officials.

"I do not see how Mayor Adams can continue governing New York City," Ocasio-Cortez wrote on the social platform X.

"The flood of resignations and vacancies are threatening gov function. Nonstop investigations will make it impossible to recruit and retain a qualified administration. For the good of the city, he

should resign," she said. Both Adams and Ocasio-Cortez are Democrats.

Adams reacted with scorn. "For anyone who self-righteously claims people charged with serious crimes should not be in jail to now say that the second Black mayor of New York should resign because of rumors and innuendo—with even a single charge being filed—is the height of hypocrisy," Adams said in a statement.

"I am leading this city to protect it from exactly that kind of phony politics. The people of this city elected me to fight for them, and I will stay and fight no matter what," he continued.

The Democratic mayor has not been accused of wrongdoing, nor has he—or those

on his staff under investigation—been charged with a crime.

A handful of Adams' long-time political critics have called on him to leave office, but top Democrats in the state have largely been silent about the criminal investigations, or generally supportive of the mayor.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday morning, the top Democrat in the House, U.S. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, of New York, said he believed Adams was "working as hard as he can to be the best mayor possible."

"We need Eric Adams to be successful as mayor because he is the mayor at this moment in time," Jeffries said. Nevertheless, the statement from Ocasio-Cortez comes



Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., speaks during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Aug. 19, 2024.

Associated Press

at a particularly vulnerable time for the Democratic mayor.

Early this month, federal agents seized electronic devices from multiple top

members of the Adams administration as part of what appears to be multiple, separate investigations. Adams himself had his phones seized by the FBI last year. □

## Ex-CIA officer convicted of groping coworker in spy agency's latest sexual misconduct case

By JIM MUSTIAN

Associated Press

A veteran CIA officer was found guilty Wednesday of assault and battery for reaching up a colleague's skirt and forcibly kissing her during a drunken party at a CIA worksite — a case that happened just days after the spy agency promised to crack down on sexual misconduct in its ranks.

Donald J. Asquith said he would appeal the misdemeanor conviction following a brief judge trial in Loudoun County, entitling him under Virginia law to a jury trial on the same allegations. Asquith, who retired after last year's attack, was sentenced to a day in jail, a year of probation and a \$2,500 fine.

"It's a vindication," said Kevin Carroll, an attorney for the victim and several other women who have come forward to Congress and authorities with their own accounts of sexual assaults and unwanted touching within the agency. "She thought she had to stand up for younger women so that they didn't have to go through something similar."

The CIA said it "acted swiftly" within days of receiving a report of the assault to restrict Asquith's contact with the victim. "CIA takes allegations of sexual assault



The seal of the Central Intelligence Agency stands next to a U.S. flag at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va.

Associated Press

and harassment extremely seriously," the agency said in a statement.

Asquith's attorney, Jon Katz, did not respond to requests for comment. He indicated in court that Asquith was too intoxicated to recall what happened at the party.

Asquith's case is at least the third in recent years involving a CIA officer facing trial in court over sexual misconduct. Last week, Brian Jeffrey Raymond was

sentenced to 30 years in federal prison for drugging, photographing and sexually assaulting more than two dozen women while he was a CIA officer in various foreign postings. And next month, a now-former CIA officer trainee faces a second trial on state charges for allegedly attacking a woman with a scarf inside a stairwell at the agency's headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

Asquith was charged

in April following a months-long sheriff's probe into the boozy party in an off-site CIA office attended by at least a dozen people celebrating Asquith's 50th birthday.

The victim, a CIA contractor, told authorities she repeatedly rebuffed Asquith's advances but that he kept pulling closer, rubbing her leg without her consent and making a series of inappropriate sexual comments, as well as

"grunting noises and thrusting motions." Asquith then "placed his hand up her skirt to her thigh numerous times causing her skirt to lift up, possibly exposing her underwear," according to court documents.

The woman told investigators she slapped Asquith's hand away and got up to leave, but that he intervened as she approached the door and asked for a "booby hug" before grabbing her with both hands around her back and rubbing his groin and chest on her. She said Asquith then "forcibly hugged her and kissed all over her face and mouth without her consent."

The woman, who spoke to congressional staffers about the attack just last week, told the judge Wednesday of the anguish and sleepless nights she's faced since coming forward.

"In only 45 minutes, Mr. Asquith utterly decimated 30 years of painstaking professionalism, dedication and even a reputation," she said in court.

"No one nor any institution has yet been willing to hold Mr. Asquith accountable for his grievous decisions and actions," she added. "If we keep treating these cases like they are parking violations, we all lose." □

## Maryland Gov. Wes Moore welcomes King Abdullah II of Jordan to the state Capitol



King Abdullah II of Jordan, left, meets with Maryland Gov. Wes Moore on Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024 in Annapolis, Md., with Maryland business and education leaders in the Maryland State House.

Associated Press

By BRIAN WITTE

Associated Press

**ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP)** — Maryland Gov. Wes Moore welcomed King Abdullah II of Jordan to the state's Capitol on Wednesday for a roundtable discussion with business and education leaders from around the state.

It was the first time a foreign head of state has visited the Maryland State House on official business, Moore said in opening remarks.

"This is a way to come together to talk about common goals, to talk about

common interests and to talk about cooperation that we think is going to be so important, and we have brought leaders from across the state to engage in this historic visit, as we look to have this very vibrant discussion about our people and our economies and our opportunities and also are futures," Moore said.

Officials from Maryland's leading industries, including engineering, research, manufacturing, health care, hospitality, financial services, and technology, attended the meeting. They

discussed trade, investment and partnership opportunities between Maryland and Jordan, the governor's office said.

Abdullah said he was delighted to have an opportunity to exchange views and have the opportunity to "look at some synergies, which I know we definitely have."

"We are instantly good friends," the king said in opening remarks about the governor sitting next to him.

"He's a fellow paratrooper, so that goes a long way to this relationship." □

# The EU is failing to dissuade African migrants despite spending billions, auditors say

By LORNE COOK

Associated Press

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — The European Union is failing to develop ways to dissuade migrants from Africa leaving for Europe without authorization and could do more to limit abuses against people trying to make the journey, the EU's financial watchdog warned on Wednesday.

The findings come in a European Court of Auditors report into the bloc's Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, a multi-billion-euro program hastily set up in 2015 after more than 1 million migrants arrived on Europe's shores, many of them fleeing war in Syria, overwhelming services in Italy and Greece.

It was meant to help tackle the root causes of migration in Africa, like poverty, conflict or unemployment. At first, 1.8 billion euros (\$2 billion) was available to distribute on hundreds of projects, but that amount has swelled to about 5 billion euros (\$5.6 billion) today.

The fund is managed by the EU's powerful executive branch, the European Commission.

"Despite the lessons learned



**Senegalese youth gather around pirogues on the beach at dusk in Fass Boye, Senegal, Aug. 29, 2023.**

... the commission is still unable to identify and report the most efficient and effective approaches to reducing irregular migration," lead EU auditor on the investigation Bettina Jakobsen told reporters.

Jakobsen said that the commission should "target the aid more thoroughly into what is actually urgent and

needed in specific areas and specific countries." She also said that "human rights risks have not been properly addressed by the commission, and that there are weaknesses in the accuracy and sustainability of the reported results." In addition, Brussels "lacked adequate procedures for recording and follow up of

allegations of violations of human rights." The auditors were aware of 10 officers who reported possible rights abuses in different parts of Africa, but the commission only had a record of one allegation. The auditors could not establish whether that case was followed up. The use of the fund in Libya one of the main jumping off

**Associated Press**

points for people desperate to try to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe was also a point of focus in the report.

A U.N.-appointed investigator has said that EU assistance to Libya's migration department and coast guard "has aided and abetted the commission of the crimes," including crimes against humanity. The commission rejects the allegation.

The auditors warned of flaws involving the use of funds and equipment meant to improve maritime surveillance and reduce deaths at sea in Libya. The International Organization for Migration estimates that around 30,000 people have died or gone missing trying to cross the Mediterranean since 2014.

The report said EU-funded "equipment could be used by actors other than the intended beneficiaries," or that Libyan staff trained by Europeans "may not be committed to the do-no-harm principle." Beneficiaries of the funds might also refuse to allow monitors to check how they use the money. □

## U.S. to hand over pest inspections of Mexican avocados to Mexico and California growers aren't happy

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — California avocado growers are fuming this week about a U.S. decision to hand over pest inspections of Mexican orchards to the Mexican government.

Inspectors hired by the U.S. Department of Agriculture have been guarding against imports of avocados infected with insects and diseases since 1997, but they have also been threatened in Mexico for refusing to certify deceptive shipments in recent years.

Threats and violence against inspectors have caused the U.S. to suspend inspections in the past, and California growers question whether Mexico's own inspectors would be better equipped to withstand such pressure.

"This action reverses the long-established inspection process designed to prevent invasions of known pests in Mexico that would devastate our industry," the California Avocado Commission wrote in an open letter to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack on Monday.

At present, inspectors work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, known as APHIS. Because the United States also grows avocados, U.S. inspectors observe orchards and packing houses in Mexico to ensure exported avocados don't carry pests that could hurt U.S. crops.

"It is well known that their physical presence greatly reduces the opportunity

of others to game the system," the avocado commission wrote.

"What assurances can APHIS provide us that its unilateral reversal of the process will be equal to or better than what has protected us?"

The letter added, "We are looking for specifics as to why you have concluded that substituting APHIS inspectors with Mexican government inspectors is in our best interest."

The decision was announced last week in a short statement by Mexico's Agriculture Department, which claimed that "with this agreement, the U.S. health safety agency is recognizing the commitment of Mexican growers, who in more than 27 years have not had any sanitary

problems in exports."

The idea that there have been no problems is far from the truth.

In 2022, inspections were halted after one of the U.S. inspectors was threatened in the western state of Mi-

choacan, where growers are routinely subject to extortion by drug cartels. Only the states of Michoacan and Jalisco are certified to export avocados to the United States. □



**A worker packs avocados at a plant in Uruapan, Michoacan state, Mexico, Feb. 9, 2024.**

**Associated Press**

## Dominican president warns of 'drastic measures' if anti-gang mission in Haiti fails

By DÁNICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— The president of the Dominican Republic warned Wednesday that his administration would take "drastic measures" to protect the country if a U.N.-backed mission in neighboring Haiti targeting gang violence fails.

Luis Abinader did not provide details of what action he might take during his speech at the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Gangs in Haiti control 80% of the capital, Port-au-Prince, and they have grown more powerful since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. More than 3,600 people have been reported killed during the first half of this year, a more than 70% increase compared with the same period last year. The violence also has left nearly 700,000 Haitians homeless in recent years and thousands have fled Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic.

Abinader thanked Kenya, which is leading the mission in Haiti with nearly 400 police officers from the East African country recently joined by nearly two dozen police and soldiers from Jamaica and two senior military officers from Belize. The personnel, however, falls significantly short of the 2,500 pledged by various countries for the mission, which the U.S. government warns is lacking resources as it considers a possible U.N. peacekeeping mission.

Abinader said the current



The social media slogan #HaitiCantWait is displayed as Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau takes part in high level meeting with an advisory group on Haiti at the United Nations headquarters on Monday, Sept. 23, 2024.

Associated Press

mission needs to be fully established so that free and transparent elections can be held.

Haiti has not held elections since 2016, and a transitional presidential council was ordered to do so by February 2026.

"Practically one year from the holding of elections, the conditions are still not in place to do so," Abinader said as he expressed con-

cern over the future of the mission. "We cannot allow the effort made to date to fail. If that were to happen, Haiti's collapse would be imminent."

Earlier this year, gangs launched coordinated attacks targeting critical government infrastructure. They raided more than two dozen police stations, opened fire on the main international airport, forcing

it to close for nearly three months, and stormed Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing roughly 4,000 inmates.

The attacks led to the resignation of former Prime Minister Ariel Henry and the creation of a transitional presidential council.

"More than three years of instability in our neighboring country has put significant pressure on our own security," Abinader said. "The Dominican state has shouldered a high responsibility in the Haitian crisis, far more than should be expected of it."

Abinader said that last year, 10% of medical appointments involved Haitians and that 147,000 of 200,000 foreign minors in the Dominican education system are Haitian in origin.

"The crisis in Haiti warrants particular attention," he said. "We can't do it alone."

Under Abinader, Dominican officials last year deported more than 170,000 people believed to be Haitians, according to government data.

But the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration has estimated the number is closer to more than 224,000. □

## U.N. chief criticizes divided Security Council for failure of leadership to end wars, calls for unity

By EDITH M. LEDERER and MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The

United Nations chief sharply criticized the powerful but deeply divided Security Council at a high-level



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during a Security Council meeting at United Nations headquarters, Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024.

Associated Press

meeting Wednesday for a failure of leadership to end wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and beyond.

"Peace demands action. And peace demands leadership," Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told the 15-member council charged with ensuring international peace and security. "Instead, we're seeing deepening geopolitical divisions and mistrust."

He pointed to repeated violations of the U.N. Charter and international law, conflicts multiplying and becoming more deadly, and civilians paying the steepest price.

The council has been blocked from any action

on Ukraine because Russia is a veto-wielding member and a party to the conflict invading its neighbor in violation of the U.N. Charter which requires all members to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all other nations.

It has been stymied in taking tough action on the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza because of Israel's close ally, the United States, another veto-wielding member. And in Sudan, there are divisions among some members supporting the warring rival generals.

The secretary-general said peace is possible in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan if council members unite and

follow the U.N. Charter and international law.

"A divided council cannot," he said. "It is imperative that council members spare no effort to work together to find common ground" as it has done overseeing 11 peacekeeping operations on three continents and authorizing humanitarian aid to global hotspots. Slovenia, which holds the Security Council presidency this month, chose the topic, "Leadership for Peace" for its signature event during the annual gathering of world leaders at the U.N. General Assembly and invited leaders from the 15 council nations to attend. □

## Create museum memories

**ORANJESTAD — Museums are an integral part of conserving and honoring cultures, and Aruba is no exception. Our Island has a wide selection of various museums for our locals and visitors to see. Take this opportunity to learn about our island and experience a different day beyond the beach. Let us introduce to you these museums.**

### Museum of Industry Aruba

The Museum of Industry is located in San Nicolas—better known as the art capital of Aruba. This museum exhibits the industrial history of gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and tourism through elaborated displays and multimedia installations. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history, which began in the 19th century. The Water Tower was built in 1939 and consists of three sections: the substructure, the high-rising vertical shaft, and the tank at the top.



The Water Tower was purchased by the Monuments Fund in 2003 so it can be restored and preserved as one of Aruba's monuments. The Museum of Industry is part of Aruba Museum Foundation (Fundacion Museo Aruban), which is a foundation set to maintain, preserve, and protect the Aruban cultural sector, history, and nature. The museum of Industry is open daily from 9 am till 6 pm.

For more information, check out their Facebook page Museum of Industry Aruba.

### Archaeological Museum of Aruba

The Archaeological Museum of Aruba is located at Schelpstraat 42 in downtown Oranjestad. The renovated historic Ecury complex in the area has been transformed from a family home to a modern museum that preserves Aruba's Amerindian cultural heritage. This 21st century museum is especially designed to preserve valuable artifacts dating



back to the Pre-Ceramic period of 2500 BC.

In the late 1980's, AMA identified its need for an adequate housing for its collection and activities. After studying various options, a project proposal was drawn up, including the acquisition and restoration of historical buildings in downtown Oranjestad.

These historical buildings were formerly the property of the Ecury family. The "Ecury Complex", is a cluster of single and two-story historic buildings, mainly Dutch colonial architecture from the late 19th and 20th century on a plot of approximately 1.700 m<sup>2</sup>.

In 1997, the Aruban Government bought the complex for the National Archaeological Museum project. In 2004, a financial agreement was signed with the European Development Fund and in 2006, restoration and construction work began on the monumental buildings and the soon-to-be exhibition space. In December 2007, the key to the complex was delivered and

the museum's employees moved to the new location. The final design for the exhibit was completed in November 2007 and the permanent exhibit, financed by the Aruban Government and the Union of Cultural Organizations (UNOCA), opened in July 2009.

At the new location, the National Archaeological Museum Aruba disposes of approximately 500 m<sup>2</sup> for its permanent exhibit. This exhibit conveys information on the origin and culture of the first inhabitants of the island through archaeological objects and modern exhibition techniques. The new permanent exhibit gives the visitor an insight into the cultures that inhabited the island in Pre-Historical and Early Historical times. The museum also hosts attractive public programs, including lectures, educational projects, temporary exhibits and workshops.

The museum is open daily from 9:30 am till 4:30 pm. For more information check out the Facebook page Museo Arqueologico Nacional Aruba. □

## Why You Should Not Miss Aruba's Free City Center Street Car Tour

**ORANJESTAD - Aruba's City Center Street Car - or as we call it in Dutch; "Tram van Oranjestad" - is a single track tram line in Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba. It was inaugurated on 22 December 2012, being the first and so far the only passenger rail service on Aruba and the rest of the Dutch Caribbean. There are two trolleys, a single-deck one with 42 seats and a double-decker with 64 seats. The line was inspired by the popular battery-powered streetcar operation at the Grove in Los Angeles, USA. Aruba's streetcars are powered by hydrogen fuel cells, which are charged by the island's**

### year-round trade winds.

Caya Betico Croes, mostly referred to as our "main street" has been developed into a pollution-free pedestrian mall. The double-decker offers you a 360 degree view of the downtown area with a picture perfect scenery of the island's clear blue skies. Who would not enjoy a ride on this beautiful and naturally air-conditioned vehicle? The tour consists of a total of 9 stops approximately 200 meters apart from each other; all stops are clearly marked. The tram will bring you close to different museums, historical plazas, monuments, the Protestant

church, Aruba's high-end mall, retail shops, and a variety of local and international cuisine restaurants. The "I love Aruba" trademark also belongs to that list. The third stop on the route is close to a 5-minute walk to the famous Renaissance Marina showcasing luxurious yachts and Aruba's blue waters.

The "Tram van Oranjestad" starts from a balloon loop near the Port of Call and serves the downtown area and ends at Plaza Nicky. The first ride starts at 10:00 am sharp with intervals of 25 minutes. The last trolley departs from the cruise port at 5:00pm. Don't miss this

tour of the beautiful Aruba's City Center- it is free! □



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scene; being the only Belgian-owned, Belgian restaurant on the island. This winning hand is not obtained by many, and L'Avenue's delicious menu and wide selection of Belgian beer, and European and New World wine emphasizes the bistro's unique vision to bring Europe into the palm of your hands!

Once part of the famous Taste of Belgium restaurant, L'Avenue offers a new point of view and brings a fresh life to what was once beloved by both locals and tourists. Crafted by Chef Juan Ludeña and his team, enjoy a superb variety of classic Belgian and French dishes served with a touch of innovation for lunch and dinner, including stews, steak-house quality meat and their famous Moules-frites, served with a variety of delicious and rich broth.

As if that wasn't enough, enjoy your meal under warm, starry lights accompanied by live music performances every day, seated either in a relaxing and cool interior area of the restaurant, or outside against a backdrop of the bright, colorful lights of the Palm Beach strip!

### More information

L'Avenue is situated at The Cove Mall in Palm Beach and is open every day from 11am to 10pm for lunch and dinner. To book a reservation or ask for more information, please contact their phone line at +297 6996400, send an e-mail info@lavenuearuba.com, or visit their website at lavenuearuba.com



(Oranjestad)—Nuzzled up in a cozy nook of The Cove Mall in the sun-kissed paradise of Palm Beach, L'Avenue takes you on a journey to experience the true flavors of Belgium. Offering a selection of traditional Belgian and French cuisine, this bistro brings the old into the new against a backdrop of laid-back luxury.

The new kid on the block, L'Avenue currently holds a unique position in the island's culinary

## Aruba Tourism Authority honored a loyal visitor at Costa Linda Beach Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Emerald Ambassador of Aruba. The honoree was respectfully honored with a certificate for her years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is pre-

sented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:



Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honoree was:  
Emerald Ambassador  
Ms. Francine Lynn from Freehold New Jersey, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Costa Linda Beach Resort Beach Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honoree, presented her with gifts, and thanked her for choosing Aru-

ba as her favorite vacation destination, as her home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honoree was:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- Aruba's safety.
- "The feeling of safety & security on the island"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for her continued visits to the "One Happy Island". ☐

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and El Patio Tacos & Tequila



## Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Picuda!

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Picuda", a very common fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba. Here's some information about the beloved Picuda.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? This is an informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamento, which the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, known as "Santa Rosa", wants to share and also obtain information from the public.

**Picuda, Sphyraena barracuda, Greater Barracuda**

Well known is the Picuda on the island—Barracuda in English. Its scientific name is Sphyraena barracuda. It is a widely caught fish. It is found throughout the year in our waters, where it is a so-called "ambush predator" that stays still or floats in the water waiting for its prey to approach so it can attack it with lightning speed. It is well known for fishermen, especially for its white flesh in fish soup. In fishing culture, there are many other names, such as Pecho blanco, Blekito, Banana, or Bleki. The names vary according to size.

### Description

The Picuda is a long fish, with a round body like a torpedo and silver in color with shiny black stripes. Below, that is, the belly, is whiter, while the

top part is darker. Its snout is very pointed, and the lower jaw is longer than the upper one. Its peduncle, where the body meets the tail, is thick, while the tail also forms a crescent but in this case one more "full" than that of mullet or conefish. This reflects the hunting style of the Picuda. It needs to be able to accelerate quickly when the prey gets close.

### In Aruba:

Picuda can be found in our waters around our island throughout the year. Picuda, in our waters, is edible with-



**Picuda**  
Greater Barracuda

out any problem. Picuda is also a highly sought-after fish by sports fishermen or recreational fishermen because it puts up a good fight once hooked. It can be caught via trolling from a boat, casting from shore with a line or rod,

or by jigging, casting the lure (artificial bait) and moving it with certain rod motions. □

**Picture courtesy of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.**

## Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of



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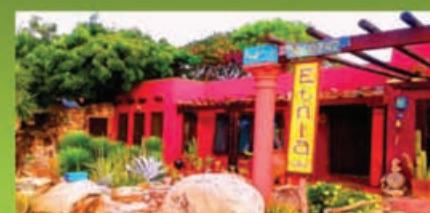
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Article by Etnia Nativa

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## Aruban ancestral legacy II

Etnia Nativa offers a unique native experience opportunity that blends education and entertainment. Share and interact with our exclusive team. Access a private facility and tour a beautiful property made with reused materials collected by its concept developer, top columnist, avocational archaeologist, and island's cultural expert. Book your visit and dive deep into the navel of Aruba.

In this new episode, Etnia Nativa continues to delve into Aruba's agro-pottery ancestors, who arrived to the ABC islands by sailing from the South American coast. When Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire were declared "useless islands" in 1513, some 2,000 Caquetio indigenous people were taken hostage and transported as captives to Hispaniola to work in the mines as slaves. At that moment, these indigenous people presumably comprised a significant part of the island and the Caquetio nation population, made out of nobles and commoners.

Over time and because of the friendship that had arisen between Juan de Ampies—one of the Spanish conquistadors—and the native ruler, Cacique Manaure, between 150 and 200 noble natives were returned to Aruba and Curaçao to work in the export of Brazilian, kwihi, wayaca, wood, and watapana pods. The origins of those who returned to Aruba and Curaçao were mainly high-ranking Caquetíos, related directly to the great Manaure. The most likely scenario is that many of these nobles who were brought back to Aruba from Hispaniola (DR) were taken originally from out of Aruba at that time. This scenario is supported by the fact that some of the descendants of these natives migrated back to the mainland in 1723 to erect the village of El Carrizal and were described as Caquetians originally from Aruba.

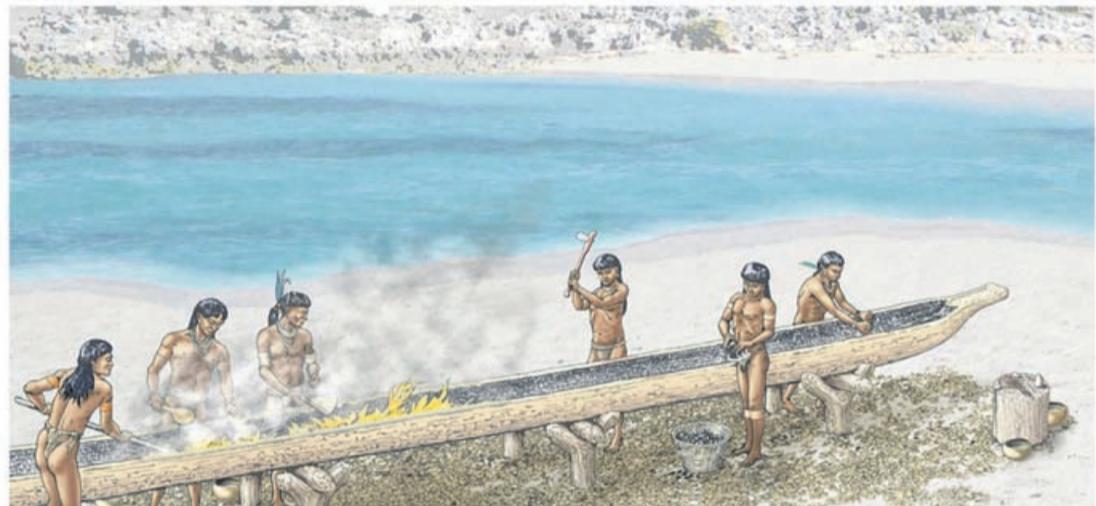
The friendship forged between the Spaniards and the chief was a determining reason why the native Arubans converted to the Catholic faith (episode 257, "The Holy Cross"). By the arrival of the Dutch in 1536, a large percentage of the Aruban population was Catholic and received regular visits from Spanish priests who sailed from the mainland. The Dutch occupation banned visits by priests from the mainland and later instituted a ban on the Roman Catholic religion.

During the time of the noble Caquetian ancestors resettled on Aruba, the island flourished. They, like the Caquetian indigenous communities of the continen-



Episode CCLXXII - 272

# Exploring Cultural Heritage



tal coast, enjoyed the right to own land as collective property, and under this perspective, Aruba prospered, being completely sustainable at that time.

In parallel to this situation, we must imagine that the landscape of Aruba at that time offered much more favorable general conditions than today. Our island was covered with a large amount of vegetation, offering perfect topographic designs that formed part of certain areas of cultivation, where people could walk for hours under extensive forests of Kwihi and Watapana trees, aka Divi-divi trees that blocked the sunlight. There were also coastal mangrove forests, open grasslands or savannas, and a landscape covered with cacti and xerophytes, while other areas were made up of wetlands and salt flats.

The ancestral territories covered a geographical area delimited by permanent sacred, social, economic, and cultural boundaries that enclosed the habitat for the people's activities. They grew corn, beans, squash, manioc, peanuts, tomatoes, tropical vegetables, fruits, and cotton in their "cunucos." They used to plant and eat the manioc root in many ways; they

made manioc bread, and it was also a nutritive ingredient for stews. In addition, the same ground manioc root was also cooked and used as starch for clothing. However, cultivation in the Cunucos was not the only activity of the island's ancestors because they also knew how to exploit very well the riches of the mangrove forests and the great variety of shellfish.

There is a very important Aruban ancestral link with the continent due to the proximity to the Paraguáná Peninsula in today's Venezuela.

If you liked our native stories and are interested dive deeper in learning the true identity of our Aruba, a visit to Etnia Nativa would be a fantastic choice. We have been a trend setting entity since 1994, as a co-founder of projects such as Arikok National Park, the Archaeological Museum, and the Artisan Foundation, among others. Every week, this newspaper will continue to share its valuable knowledge. Don't miss the opportunity to feel the island's spirit through our real stories that are not just remembered; they resonate, they're felt, and they stir souls to the bone. Book your visit: WhatsApp +297 592 2702 etnianativa03@gmail.com

## Fruit Loose & Veggie Boost: Aruban fruits and vegetables

**Fresh fruits make a tropical holiday's picture complete. Whether you see the mangoes hanging in the trees or the fresh fruit cocktail on the side table of your pool bed, the link is there: you are in the tropics. Aruba grows her own fruits and veggies and there are some pretty out-of-space local species you may never had heard of, but really healthy and delicious.**

### Mispel

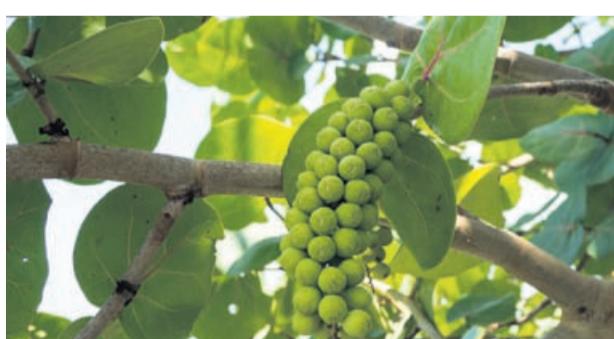
This is a fruit with a character (5-10 cm/2-4 inches). It does not ripe until it is picked or falls off the tree. Mispel is hard with a sandpaper like texture when immature, soft and juicy when ripe. It's technically a berry, but contains a skin similar to that of a kiwi. It's grainy and sweet, with a light, musky flavor. The sap or gum from the tree is also a source of 'chicle' the original ingredient used to make chewing gum. Rich in tannins, antioxidants shown to contain anti-inflammatory compounds, and vitamin C, essential for healthy immune function. Season: year-round.

### Kenepa



Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit is related to the lychee and have tight, thin but rigid skins. Inside the skin is the tart, tangy, or sweet pulp of the fruit covering a large seed. The pulp is usually cream or orange colored. Kenepa strengthens the immune system, and prevents the reproduction of bacteria and viruses in the body. This fruit is highly recommended to treat lung infections and urinary tract infections. It also helps to cure insomnia and rejuvenates the nervous system. Season: the fruit typically ripen during the summer.

### Druif



There is no chance you did not bump into one of the sea grape trees while spending your vacation on Aruba. The sea grape plant is often used in ocean-side landscaping in sandy soil right on the beach and it produces clusters of

fruit that resemble grapes. Are sea grapes edible? Yes, they are. Animals enjoy sea grapes and humans can eat them as well, and they are used to make jam. They contain very low calories and sugar, enabling good bacterium to digest food and excrete waste quickly which is effective in preventing constipation. Season: Sep-Oct.

### Shimarucu



Maybe Aruba's most popular wild fruit tree. You may have noticed cars at the side of the road and people picking those red berries. Well, that's Shimarucu. The local habit to stop for these delicious fruits goes from generation to generation. Its fruit's degree of sour depends on the amount of rain it gets. Red Shimarucus tend to taste better than orange. The fruit has super power: a true vitamin bomb. Adults only need to eat 3-4 of these berries to meet their daily recommended amount of Vitamin C. Season: Rainy months (Oct-Jan).

### Tamarind



A delicious, sweet fruit that has a wide variety of uses and applications, both for medicinal and culinary purposes. It is a medium-sized bushy tree with evergreen leaves and fruit that develops in pods characterized by long, brown shells. Inside is a sticky, fleshy, juicy pulp, which is the Tamarind fruit. Both sweet and sour in taste, the fruit contains a significant level of vitamin C, as well as vitamin E, B vitamins, calcium, iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese, and dietary fiber. There are also a number of organic compounds that make tamarind a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. Season: March.

When it comes to veggies the island certainly offers a home-grown selection. They taste delicious and have their specific talents to boost your immune system. Start the day with a 'batida' (smoothie) enriched with a local veggie touch or select your restaurant that offers local vegetable dishes to get the real pure taste of it.

### Comcomber chiquito



This is a sort of local squash, but looks like a cucumber with prickly skin. The taste however is bitterer than the cucumber and the vegetable is smaller in size but bigger in width. Inside is a soft, fleshy pulp and seeds, just like the cucumber. Comcomber chiquito is grown in the island and used in salads and 'stoba' (stew) or on its own in vinegar. The veggie contains multiple B vitamins, including vitamin B1, vitamin B5, and vitamin B7 (biotin). B vitamins are known to help ease feelings of anxiety and buffer some of the damaging effects of stress. Additionally this veggie is rich in two of the most basic elements needed for healthy digestion: water and fiber. Season: year-round.

### Yambo

Family of Okra, also known as 'lady's fingers': a green flowering plant. Okra belongs to the same plant family as hibiscus and cotton. A classic favorite dish in Aruba is Sopi di yambo. It has long been favored as a food for the health-conscious. It contains potassium, vitamin B, vitamin C, folic acid, and calcium. It's low in calories and has a high dietary fiber content. Recently, a new benefit of including okra in your diet is being considered. Okra has been suggested to help manage blood sugar in cases of type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes. Season: year-round.

### Bonch'i Cunucu

A long, small bean, boiled for a side dish or snack. Long beans have a chewy, crunchy texture—more so than snap beans—and a flavor reminiscent of the dry navy bean or asparagus. Besides stir-fry, soups and salads, the long bean is a good choice for stewing, braising (to remain chewy and firm), sautéing, shallow frying, and deep frying. With cooking, the long bean's bean flavor intensifies. Long beans are low in calories, about 45 calories per cup, and rich in vitamin A and also contain vitamin C and potassium. Season: year-round.

### Pampuna

In the endless summer of Caribbean living we only have to concern ourselves with a wet season and a dry season. Still we do indulge heavily in the pleasures of pumpkin and enjoy Caribbean pumpkin recipes year round. A popular dish in Aruban restaurants is Sopa Di Pompuna, don't miss it. This dish is made of pumpkin soup, and parsley. Pumpkins are rich in flavonoid polyphenolic antioxidants such as xanthin, lutein and carotenes and also contain vitamins. Pumpkin seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and proteins. Pumpkins are used to make desserts, breads and soups. □

## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

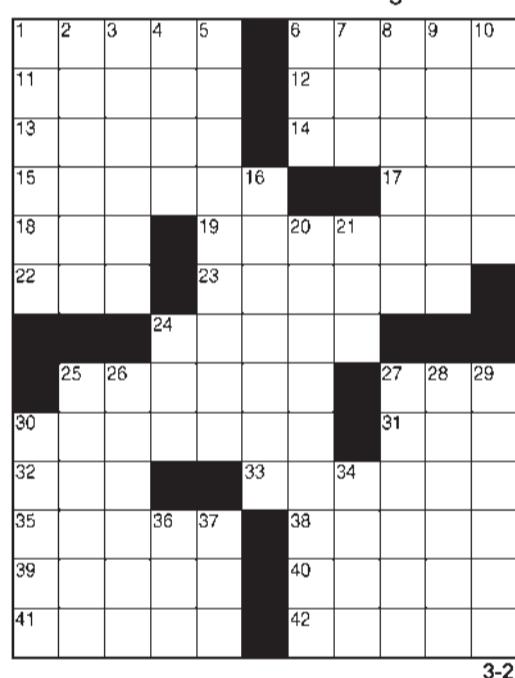
**ACROSS**

- 1 Cast member 39 King or czar
- 6 Swirly prints 40 Bile source
- 11 Bear out 41 Asparagus unit
- 12 Chip choice 42 Perfect places
- 13 Heathen
- 14 One with a record
- 15 View-points
- 17 Pindar work
- 18 Tell tales
- 19 Was indecisive
- 22 Young fellow
- 23 Changes, in a way
- 24 Govt. investment
- 25 Clock topper
- 27 Really impress
- 30 Words before asking a favor
- 31 Director Spike
- 32 Corn unit
- 33 Mischievous one
- 35 Stroll
- 38 Chap



Yesterday's answer

1 Horrify	8 Harmony	26 Sing like a bird
2 Brain cases	9 Aegean island	27 Statue setting
3 — up (got dressed)	10 In shape	28 Flag
4 Track shape	16 Tea urn	29 Some fishers
5 Like wind and solar energy	20 Esteemed	30 Carries
6 Binary digit	21 Break off	34 Reached base, in a way
7 Peace, to Caesar	25 Join forces	36 Pasture
		37 Make goofs



3-2

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONG FELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-2

CRYPTOQUOTE

Q K K E Q X C K Y P N M R C D H V X

M N Q Z X Y F N X X D N R Z O Q F C .

— FRKKRQL CDQINCONQZN  
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: MARCH, WHEN DAYS ARE GETTING LONG, LET THY GROWING HOURS BE STRONG TO SET RIGHT SOME WINTRY WRONG. — CAROLINE MAY

## Cruise ship Schedule: October 01 - 13 2024

TUE	01	CARNIVAL HORIZON FREEWINDS	09.00 06.00	ARR DEPT	BERTH
WED	02	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C 1
THU	03	WORLD EXPLORER	08.00	23.59	C 1
SUN	06	FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E -
TUE	08	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL VISTA FREEWINDS	08.00 13.00 06.00	21.00 23.00 ****	B I E 1
SUN	13	FREEWINDS - DEPT.	****	22.15	E -

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

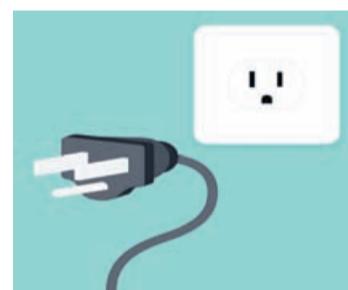
Supermarket hours



(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Drinking water



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

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Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

# Fluoride in drinking water poses enough risk to merit new EPA action, judge says



A student drinks from a water fountain at an elementary school in California on Sept. 20, 2023.

Associated Press

By MIKE STOBBE  
AP Medical Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)**—A federal judge has ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to further regulate fluoride in drinking water because high levels could pose a risk to the intellectual development of children. U.S. District Judge Edward Chen cautioned that it's not certain that the amount of fluoride typically added to water is causing lower IQ in kids, but he concluded that mounting research points to an unreasonable risk that it could be. He ordered the EPA to take steps to lower that risk, but didn't say what those measures should be. It's the first time a federal judge has made a determination about the neurodevelopmental risks to children of the recommended U.S. water fluoride level, said Ashley Malin, a University of

Florida researcher who has studied the effect of higher fluoride levels in pregnant women.

She called it "the most historic ruling in the U.S. fluoridation debate that we've ever seen."

The judge's ruling is another striking dissent to a practice that has been hailed as one of the greatest public health achievements of the last century. Fluoride strengthens teeth and reduces cavities by replacing minerals lost during normal wear and tear, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Last month, a federal agency determined "with moderate confidence" that there is a link between higher levels of fluoride exposure and lower IQ in kids. The National Toxicology Program based its conclusion on studies involving fluoride levels at

about twice the recommended limit for drinking water.

The EPA, a defendant in the lawsuit, argued that it wasn't clear what impact fluoride exposure might have at lower levels. But the agency is required to make sure there is a margin between the hazard level and exposure level. And "if there is an insufficient margin, then the chemical poses a risk," Chen wrote in his 80-page ruling Tuesday.

"Simply put, the risk to health at exposure levels in United States drinking water is sufficiently high to trigger regulatory response by the EPA" under federal law, he wrote. An EPA spokesperson, Jeff Landis, said the agency was reviewing the decision but offered no further comment. In 1950, federal officials endorsed water fluoridation to prevent tooth decay, and they continued to promote it even after fluoride toothpaste brands hit the market several years later.

Fluoride can come from a number of sources, but drinking water is the main source for Americans, researchers say. Nearly two-thirds of the U.S. population currently gets fluoridated drinking water, according to CDC data. □



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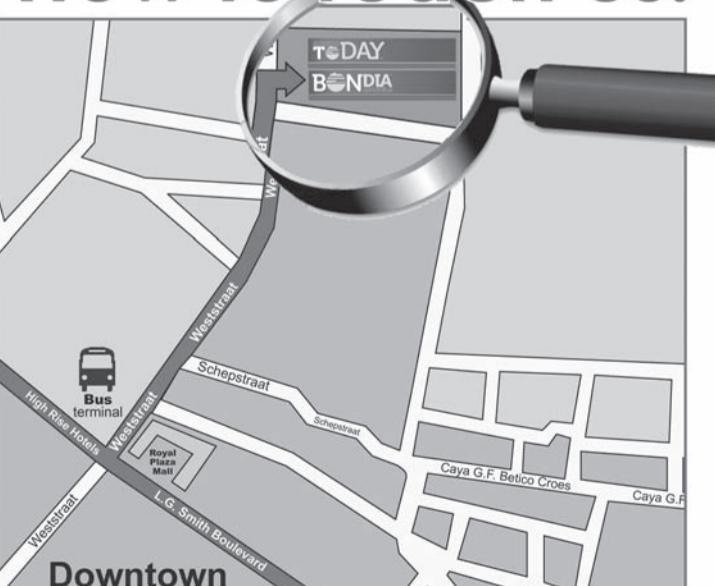


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## How to reach us!



## Can AI make video games more immersive? Some studios turn to AI-fueled NPCs for more interaction

By SARAH PARVINI  
AP Technology Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — For decades, video games have relied on scripted, stilted interactions with non-player characters to help shepherd gamers in their journeys. But as artificial intelligence technology improves, game studios are experimenting with generative AI to help build environments, assist game writers in crafting NPC dialogue and lend video games the improvisational spontaneity once reserved for table-top role-playing games.

In the multiplayer game "Retail Mage," players help run a magical furniture store and assist customers in hopes of earning a five-star review. As a salesperson and wizard they can pick up and examine items or tell the system what they'd like to do with a product, such as deconstruct chairs for parts or tear a page from a book to write a note to a shopper.

A player's interactions with the shop and NPCs around them from gameplay mechanics to content and dialogue creation are fueled by AI rather than a prede-



Jam & Tea Studios founders, left to right, Michael Yichao, center, Carl Kwoh, third from right, and J. Aaron Farr, fourth from right, pose with staff on Jan. 18, 2024, in Roslyn, Wash.

Associated Press

termined script to create more options for chatting and using objects in the shop.

"We believe generative AI can unlock a new kind of gameplay where the world is more responsive and more able to meet players at their creativity and the things that they come up with and the stories they want to tell inside a fantasy setting that we cre-

ate for them," said Michael Yichao, cofounder of Jam & Tea Studios, which created "Retail Mage."

The typical NPC experience often leaves something to be desired. Pre-scripted interactions with someone meant to pass along a quest typically come with a handful of chatting options that lead to the same conclusion: players get the information they need and

continue on. Game developers and AI companies say that by using generative AI tech, they aim to create a richer experience that allows for more nuanced relationships with the people and worlds that designers build.

Generative AI could also provide more opportunities for players to go off-script and create their own stories if designers can craft

environments that feel more alive and can react to players' choices in real-time.

Tech companies continue to develop AI for games, even as developers debate how, and whether, they'll use AI in their products. Nvidia created its ACE technologies to bring so-called "digital humans" to life with generative AI. In-world AI provides developers with a platform for generative NPC behavior and dialogue. Gaming company Ubisoft said last year that it uses Ghostwriter, an in-house AI tool, to help write some NPC dialogue without replacing the video game writer.

A report released by the Game Developers Conference in January found that nearly half of developers surveyed said generative AI tools are currently being used in their workplace, with 31% saying they personally use those tools. Developers at indie studios were most likely to use generative AI, with 37% reporting use of the tech.

Still, roughly four out of five developers said they worry about the ethical use of AI. □

## Google complains about Microsoft cloud tactics to European Union antitrust watchdog

**LONDON (AP)** — Google escalated a feud with Microsoft over cloud computing on Wednesday with a

European Union antitrust complaint accusing its tech rival of anticompetitive practices.



In this April 17, 2007 file photo, exhibitors work on laptop computers in front of an illuminated sign of the Google logo at the industrial fair Hannover Messe in Hanover, Germany.

Associated Press

In a blog post, Google alleged that Microsoft's licensing practices lock business customers into using its Azure cloud computing platform.

It said Microsoft is the only cloud provider that uses such tactics, which stifles competition, costs businesses more and exposes them to bigger security risks.

Google, which competes against Microsoft with its Google Cloud services, said it filed a formal complaint with the European Commission, the 27-nation bloc's executive branch and top antitrust enforcer. Microsoft said that it already amicably settled

similar concerns raised by European cloud providers, "even after Google hoped they would keep litigating." Those providers, part of the trade group Cloud Infrastructure Services Providers in Europe, said in July that they withdrew their own complaint after signing a deal with Microsoft.

"Having failed to persuade European companies, we expect Google similarly will fail to persuade the European Commission," Microsoft said in a prepared statement.

A commission spokesperson said it has received the complaint and will assess it "under our standard procedures."

Google said Microsoft changed its licensing terms in 2019 to impose "extreme financial penalties" on businesses that want to use Windows Server software on rival services like Google Cloud and Amazon Web Services.

That's despite there being no technical barriers to switch services.

Locking in users to a single technology platform brings heightened security risks, Google said, pointing to a global tech outage in July stemming from a faulty software update by cybersecurity company CrowdStrike that grounded flights and knocked banks and hospital systems offline. □

## MLB playoffs approach with Judge vs. Ohtani as an enticing Fall Classic possibility

By DAVID BRANDT

AP Baseball Writer

The Major League Baseball playoffs are approaching and a Shohei Ohtani vs. Aaron Judge matchup in the World Series looms as an enticing October possibility.

While the rooting interests of baseball fans vary widely, there's little doubt MLB and television executives are drooling over the potential matchup between two of the top sluggers of this generation. Ohtani recently became the first player to have 50 homers and 50 stolen bases in one season while Judge is up to 56 homers.

On top of that, Ohtani (Los Angeles Dodgers) and Judge (New York Yankees) play in the nation's top two media markets for two of the sport's most storied franchises.

Of course, there will be 10 other teams trying to block those teams from the Fall Classic. Last season, the Texas Rangers beat the Arizona Diamondbacks 4 games to 1 for their first title in franchise history.

Here's a look at what's coming:

**Who's In The Playoffs? Who's Still Fighting?**



New York Yankees' Aaron Judge grabs a bat from the dugout before a baseball game against the Oakland Athletics in Oakland, Calif., Sunday, Sept. 22, 2024.

Associated Press

In the American League, the Yankees, Cleveland Guardians, Houston Astros and Baltimore Orioles have all clinched four of the six playoff spots. The Kansas City Royals and Detroit Tigers are in the best position to claim the final two AL wild cards, but the Seattle Mariners and Minnesota Twins are among the teams in pursuit.

In the National League, the Dodgers, Philadelphia

Phillies, Milwaukee Brewers and San Diego Padres have claimed four of the six spots. The New York Mets, Arizona Diamondbacks and Atlanta Braves are fighting for the last two wild cards.

**How Does Baseball's Wild-Card Round Work?**

The best-of-three wild card format is in its third season. The format was changed in 2022 from the sudden death one-game format

that was in place since 2012 with the exception of the COVID-19 pandemic-affected 2020 season.

Six teams each from the American League and National League will qualify for the postseason, including the three division winners in each league. The three wild-card teams in each league will be the teams with the best record that didn't win their division.

The top two division win-

ners with the best records in each league will get a bye and don't have to play in the wild-card round. Those four teams get a few days of rest. Right now, that would be the Yankees and Guardians in the American League and the Phillies and Dodgers in the National League.

The wild-card round will feature four series: The No. 6 seed will play at the No. 3 seed in both the AL and NL. The No. 5 seed will play at the No. 4 seed.

One big advantage for the higher seed in those wild-card series is they get to host all three games.

**What About Ties in the Standings?**

If there's a tie for one of the playoff spots after the 162-game regular season, mathematical tiebreakers will be used instead of an extra game. The first will be the head-to-head record between the two teams involved.

If that can't handle the stalemate, the team with the best intra-division record will win the tiebreaker. If that doesn't work, the process continues with more and more convoluted solutions until a resolution is reached. □

## First U.S. high school with an all-basketball curriculum names court after Knicks' Julius Randle

By BRIAN MAHONEY

AP Basketball Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)**—The court at the nation's first high school with a curriculum designed around a career in basketball will be named for New York Knicks All-Star Julius Randle.

The announcement was made Wednesday at a groundbreaking ceremony for the new, 69,000-square-foot building in the Bronx that will house the Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball School.

Founded in 2021, the tuition-free charter school offers instruction in areas such as sports media, law, medicine and facilities management.

Its first class will graduate in 2025.

Randle has been a supporter of the school through his "30 for 3" campaign, where he donates \$500 for each 3-pointer he makes. He made 76 last season for \$38,000.

That contribution could have been much higher, but Randle sustained a season-ending dislocated shoulder during a Jan. 27 victory over Miami, just days before he was selected to the Eastern Conference All-Star team for the third time in his five seasons in New York.

Randle had surgery in April. Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau said Wednes-



Former New York Knicks basketball players Walt Frazier, second from left without a hard hat, Earl Monroe, center left, Knicks forward Julius Randle, Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau and former Knicks player John Starks attend a groundbreaking ceremony for the Earl Monroe New Renaissance Basketball School, where the basketball court will be named for Randle, Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

day he thinks Randle is healthy as the team prepares to report to training camp on Monday.

Thibodeau took part in the ceremony along with Knicks Hall of Famers Monroe and Walt Frazier, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver and others.

After Randle spoke, he was told that the school's basketball teams would play on the Julius Randle All-Star Court.

Randle's contributions have helped raise more than \$1.3 million for the school, which was created by filmmaker Dan Klores and had former NBA Commissioner David Stern, who died in 2020, as its first trustee. □

## Familiar foes: Las Vegas Aces and New York Liberty set for WNBA Finals rematch in playoff semifinals

By DOUG FEINBERG  
AP Basketball Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The stage is set for A'ja Wilson and the Las Vegas Aces to take on Breanna Stewart and the New York Liberty in a star-studded rematch of last year's WNBA Finals. This time it's a round sooner.

The Liberty and Aces swept their first-round opponents and will meet Sunday in a semifinal showdown. New York has been on a mission all season to get back to the Finals and win the franchise's first WNBA championship.

To accomplish that goal they'll have to beat the two-time defending champion Aces. They'll meet in



Las Vegas Aces guard Kelsey Plum (10) drives against Seattle Storm guard Skylar Diggins-Smith (4) during the second half in Game 2 of a WNBA basketball first-round playoff game Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2024, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

the semifinals best-of-five series that begins in New York in Sunday.

"They've been the best team all year. They played like a team ... with an edge," Las Vegas coach Becky Hammon said. "And we've worked our way there. I feel like we got our edge back probably in the last three to four weeks. I don't think we're the same team that New York has seen."

The Liberty swept all three games during the regular season from Las Vegas with the last victory in New York three weeks ago. Unanimous league MVP A'ja Wilson didn't play in that game as she was resting an injured foot.

"New York is a lot better than last year," Aces guard Kelsey Plum said. "Just plain and simple. They're bigger. They've shot the ball at a better clip. Pound for pound, individually, if you go down the line, all of them are better players."

"We have to focus on what we can do. Sometimes, we can be our own worst enemy," Plum added. "But they kicked our butt all three times. This is a fresh start."

But there's no secret they've taken care of business and they've done what they needed to do, and that's why they have the 1 seed. So it's an uphill battle."

Unlike last season when the Aces were the No. 1 seed, the Liberty have home-court advantage this time. While New York has been the best team all season the Aces struggled at the beginning of the year while Chelsea Gray was out recovering from a foot injury she suffered in the 2023 Finals.

The Aces have been playing lately, winning nine of their final 10 games heading into the postseason before they swept Seattle in the opening round. The only loss in that stretch was the one to New York.

The Liberty advanced to the semifinals by sweeping Atlanta. □



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